

A248

R W

**APPROVED FOR RELEASE 1993
CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM**

AM-REPORT SKED 12-31

BY JOHN F. BARTON

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS SAID FRIDAY IT CANNOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF CONSPIRACY IN THE SHOOTINGS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY AND MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., BUT NEITHER CAN IT SAY THERE WERE CONSPIRACIES.

THE PANEL, ESTABLISHED IN SEPTEMBER, ASKED TO BE RECONSTITUTED BY THE 95TH CONGRESS TO PURSUE UNRESOLVED INDICATIONS OF CONSPIRACIES IN EACH KILLING AND TRY TO "RESOLVE THE GROWING DOUBTS" AMONG AMERICANS ABOUT WHY KENNEDY AND KING WERE ASSASSINATED.

POLLS SHOW MANY AMERICANS REJECT THE CONCLUSIONS OF INVESTIGATORY BODIES THAT THE KILLERS ACTED ALONE, WITHOUT ACCOMPLICES.

TO CONDUCT AN EXHAUSTIVE STUDY, THE PANEL SOUGHT \$6.5 MILLION -- UNUSUALLY HIGH FOR A CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION -- FOR ITS FIRST YEAR'S WORK AND SAID IT COULD NOT PREDICT WHEN ITS JOB WOULD BE FINISHED.

IN ITS FINAL REPORT FOR 1976, THE COMMITTEE NOTED THAT WHEN JAMES EARL RAY PLEADED GUILTY IN 1969 HE DISPUTED ASSERTIONS BY HIS LAWYER AND THE PROSECUTOR THAT NO CONSPIRACY EXISTED TO ASSASSINATE KING.

"THE COMMITTEE DOES NOT MEAN TO IMPLY THAT THERE WAS OR WAS NOT A CONSPIRACY; IT MERELY INDICATES THAT THIS IS ONE OF THE AREAS WHICH REQUIRES FURTHER INVESTIGATION, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE FAILURE TO OBTAIN A FULL STATEMENT OF INVOLVEMENT FROM RAY BY THE TENNESSEE AUTHORITIES," THE REPORT SAID.

RAY, SERVING A 99-YEAR TERM, NOW SAYS HIS ATTORNEYS ENTICED HIM TO PLEAD GUILTY FOR THEIR OWN GAIN. THE SUPREME COURT HAS REFUSED TO ORDER A NEW TRIAL. HE HAS OFFERED TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE.

THE COMMITTEE SAID CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN LEE HARVEY OSWALD AND THE RUSSIAN AND CUBAN EMBASSIES IN MEXICO CITY ALSO NEED INVESTIGATION. OSWALD, ACCUSED BY DALLAS POLICE OF KILLING KENNEDY ON NOV. 23, 1963, WAS SLAIN BEFORE HE COULD BE QUESTIONED.

CHIEF COMMITTEE COUNSEL RICHARD SPRAGUE, A FORMER PROSECUTOR, SAID SEVERAL HUNDRED WITNESSES MUST BE INTERVIEWED BEFORE DOUBTS CAN BE RESOLVED IN THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION.

20752

THE PANEL SAID ALL THE RECENT PUBLICITY ABOUT MISCONDUCT BY U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES; "FOREIGN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS; CONCEALED EVIDENCE; DESTRUCTION OF EVIDENCE AND POSSIBLE DELIBERATE MISINFORMATION HAVE FOSTERED AMONG OUR CITIZENS AN ENSUING LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES."

"THE HISTORY OF THESE ASSASSINATIONS HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT THE PASSAGE OF MORE TIME WILL ONLY INCREASE THAT CONCERN AND ONLY A THOROUGH AND DEFINITIVE INQUIRY AT THIS TIME WILL RESOLVE THE GROWING DOUBTS," IT SAID.

THE REPORT SAID A WITNESS NEVER PREVIOUSLY INTERVIEWED HAS SAID RAY TOLD HIM THAT AFTER HE FLED TO EUROPE, HE "CONTACTED ANOTHER PERSON FROM WHOM HE RECEIVED FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS TO AID IN HIS CONTINUING FLIGHT."

REP. HENRY B. GONZALEZ, D-TEX., SAID IT WAS VITAL THAT THE CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION BE CONDUCTED INDEPENDENTLY -- DESPITE THE EXTRA COST.

"WE KNOW THAT NEITHER THE FBI NOR CIA COOPERATED FULLY WITH THE WARREN COMMISSION," HE SAID. "AND WE KNOW THAT THE FBI DIRECTOR IN 1968 HAD PASSIONATE FEELINGS AGAINST DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING."

ASKED IF HE FELT THE CIA OR FBI HAD ENGAGED IN A COVERUP, SPRAGUE SAID: "WE HAVE NOT REACHED THE STAGE THAT WE COULD MAKE A STATEMENT ON THAT."

SAYING THE REPORT "CONTAINS NO BOMBHELLS," WALTER FAUNTROY, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DELEGATE TO CONGRESS, SAID: "I REGRET THAT AFTER THREE MONTHS WE CAN'T GIVE YOU MUCH HARD INFORMATION."

AS FOR HIMSELF, FAUNTROY SAID: "I REMAIN UNCONVINCED THAT THERE WAS NOT A CONSPIRACY." BUT HE SAID HE IS NOT CONVINCED, EITHER, THAT THERE WAS ONE.

UPI 12-31 04:27 PES